



How to Align Customer Training With Certifications



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Introduction

If you're struggling with delivering a cohesive customer training certification program, you're not alone. Historically, the training industry has separated the teaching process (training) from the assessment process (certification). However, for customer educators, this is a major problem as it prevents the iterative feedback cycles necessary for both the student and the organization to best achieve the goals of successful product adoption and usage. From strategy to systems to job functions, it's time for us to reassess how learning and certifications are delivered together.

Continue reading to see two examples of how training professionals have merged learning and certifications at their companies. By doing so, they were able to:

1. Achieve integrated learning outcomes
2. Personalize user learning pathways
3. And measure the impact of certification.

Ready to learn more? Let's get started.

The Old LMS Industry Standard

Learning Management Systems are one of the oldest categories of software on the market. Essentially, they were designed to be bank vaults, as their primary use case was for compliance. They were built to live on premise, were difficult to adapt, and any changes you had to make involved manual processes.

On top of this, traditional certifications were equally painful. They involved designated testing centers, on premise proctoring, and vendor-controlled publishing, billing, and finance.



Moreover, learning management systems were completely separate from certifications, with different teams, technologies and data flows. They were not designed to integrate with external systems, or be updated continuously in the cloud with innovative technologies. Versioning prevented regular updates, and often caused processes and design to break. Thus, it's been difficult for certification teams to get data on what their students are learning and combine that with the certification process.

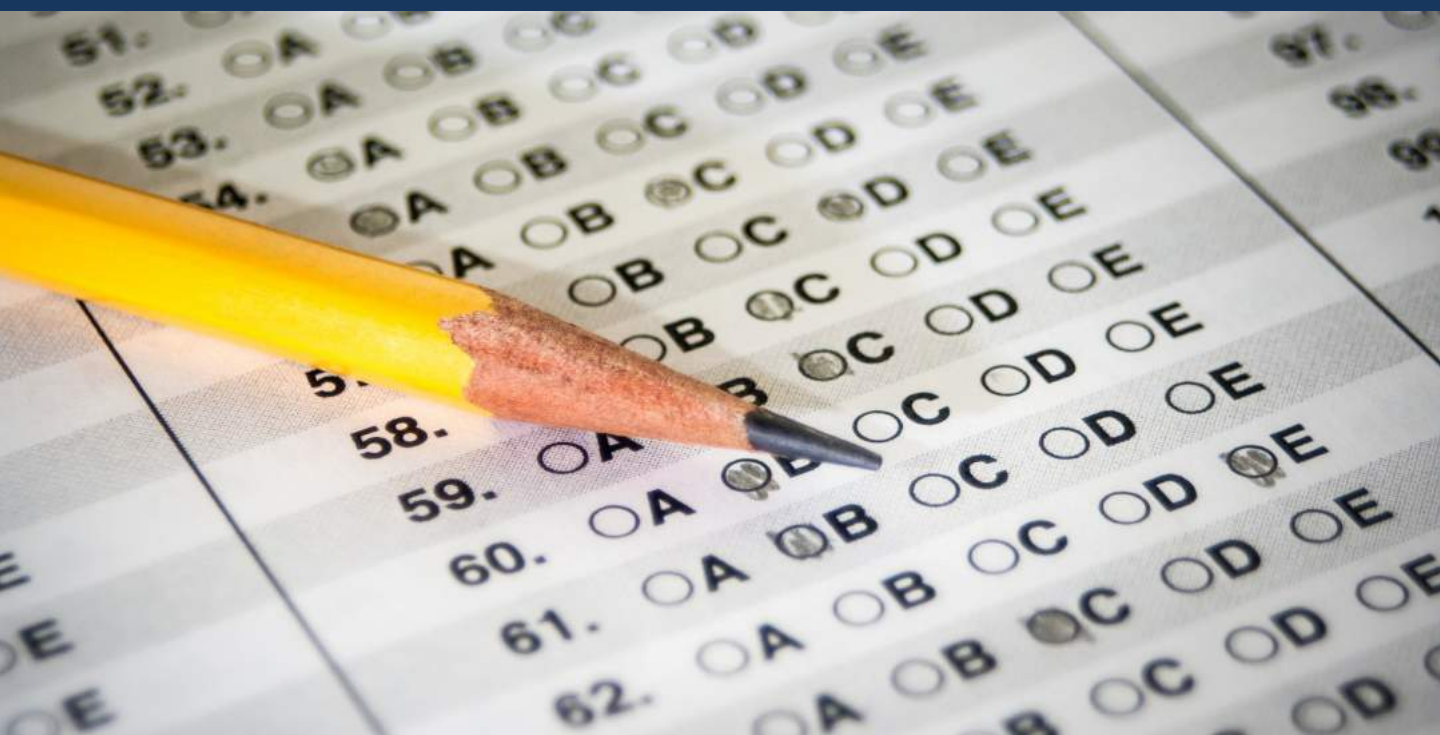
And really, what's the point of assessing something you may not even be teaching? This disconnect has often driven a wedge between training content and assessments. As a result, it's challenging to ensure that the training materials provided are truly assessed in certification exams.



Merging the LMS and Certifications

So, what's changed? A modern Learning Management System (LMS) like Skilljar has lightweight quizzing and certification. It includes not just completion records, but also much richer data about the content that learners have engaged with. And while it has the security of the old bank vault LMS, it also leverages modern integrations like single sign on (SSO) and APIs to create streamlined user experiences.

In addition, both lightweight proctored exams are now offered online, which means students can take tests at their convenience and certification exams can reach far more candidates than what was possible when physical testing centers were the only option.



Key Benefits of Integrated Systems

For your reference, we've outlined a few key benefits of merging your LMS with certifications below:

Achieve integrated outcomes

The first benefit of this type of program is that organizations can create trackable learning paths. Specifically, you can combine your training and certifications, such as prerequisites. You're also able to add lightweight testing (i.e. knowledge checks) and self-paced learning to the mix. This can help both teams better tailor their content to their objectives and optimize their efforts.

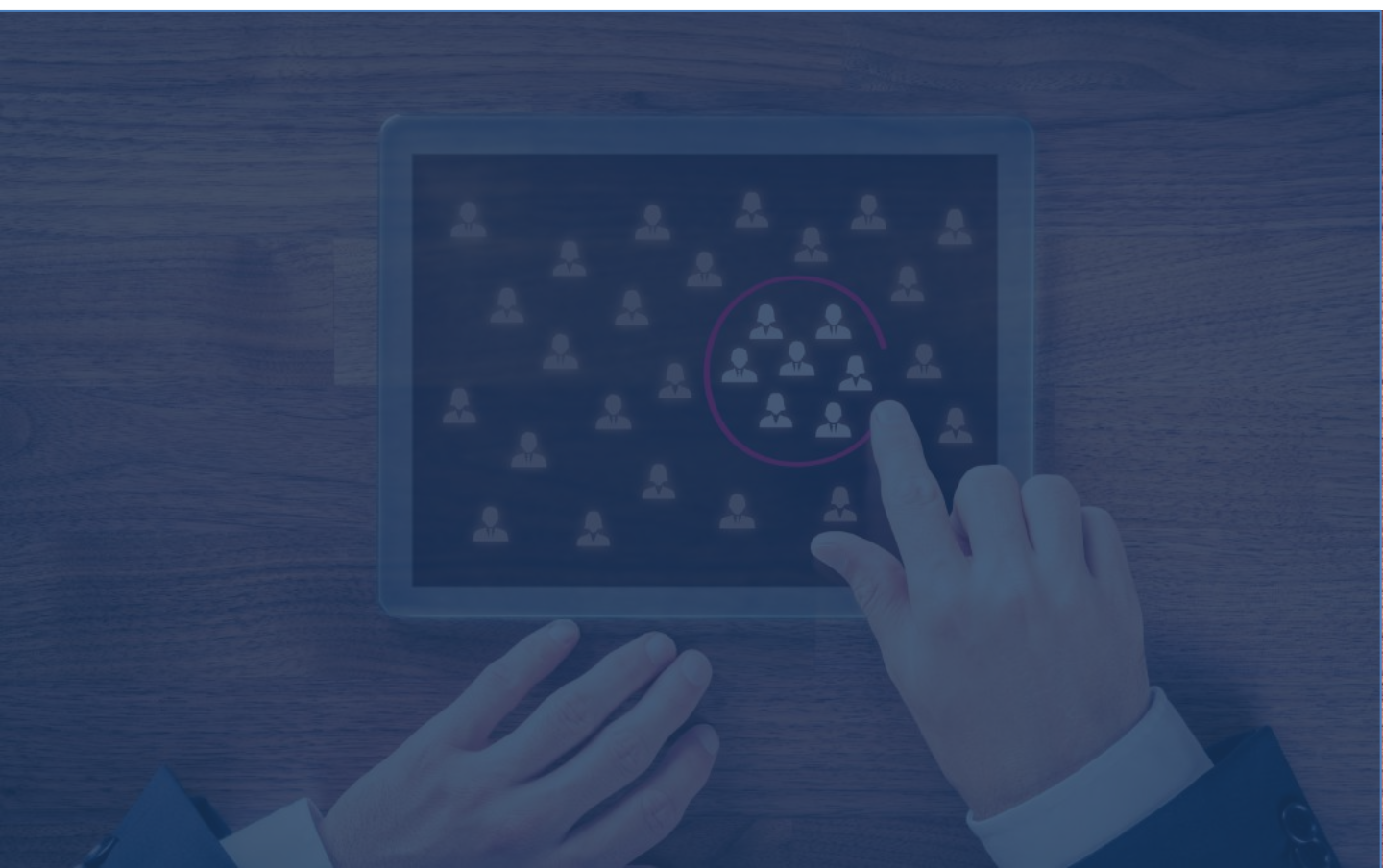


Create personalized learner experiences

When your systems work well together, your students can have one easily accessible destination for all training and certification activity.

Organizations are also able to tailor communications based on personalized student activity, such as students who have completed training prerequisites and practice exams, but haven't yet signed up for a certification exam.

Other benefits include improved instructional support, as well as on-demand and self-paced instruction and exam prep.



Measure certifications' impact on business results

Prior to these integrations, it was either impossible or highly manual to connect certifications, training, revenue, and product usage. Not only was that data in silos, it was often irreconcilable because people used different email addresses or changed companies.

Now, organizations can assess training and certifications holistically to understand comprehensive student activity and correlate this with other success criteria, such as usage and revenue. For example, you might learn that certified users are 90% more likely to renew or expand than non-certified users.

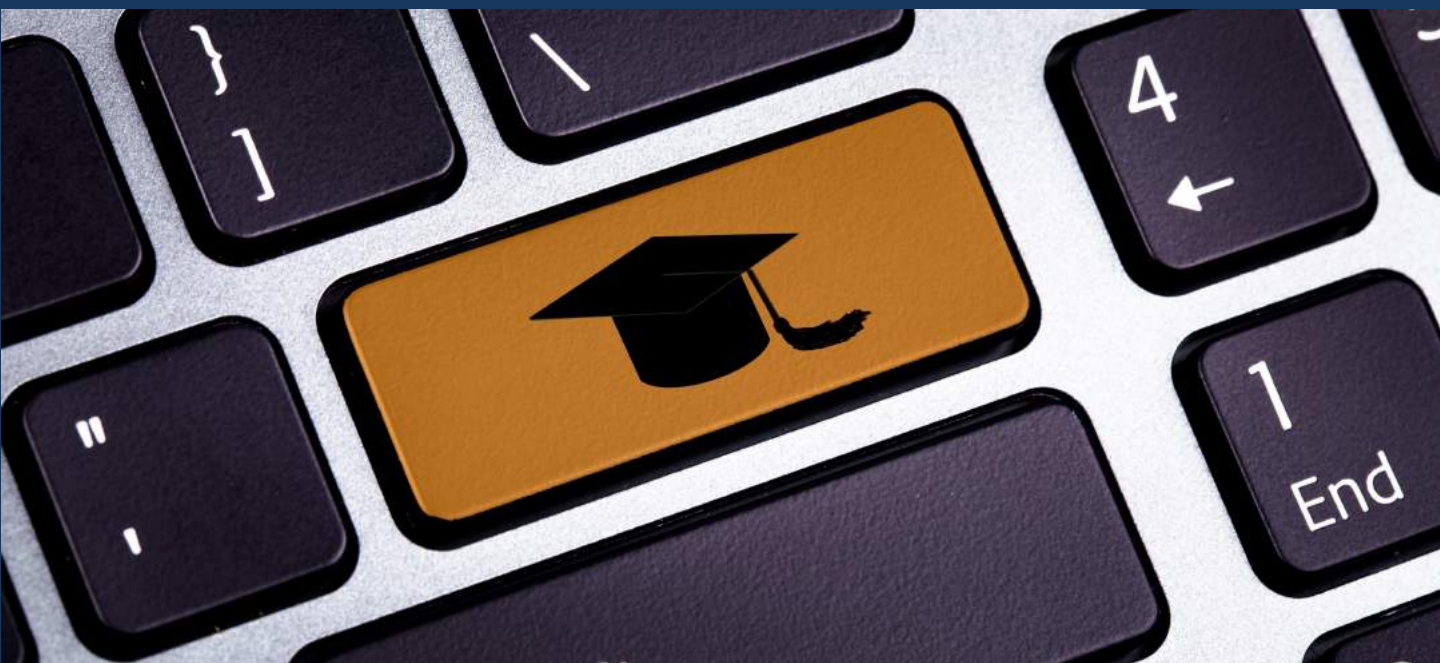


Case Studies from Successful Programs

There are two types of learning and certifications programs, which we'll describe on the following pages.

The first is what we'd call “**low-stakes certification**.” Typically, this does not involve proctoring, as it is more about driving brand awareness and creating a sense of community among users. This may be accomplished through publicly available courses. When a student completes a course, they would then receive a badge to display on LinkedIn.

The second is “**high-stakes certification**,” in which online proctored exams are essential. These types of programs typically involve more formal credentialing. For instance, your user base is looking to prove their skills and advance their career in an area of your expertise.



PROCORE[®]

Creating an Industry-Leading Certification Program Entirely Through the LMS

Procore is a construction management software company that helps firms increase project efficiency and accountability by streamlining and mobilizing project communications and documentation.

Their team was seeking a solution that would help them streamline the onboarding of an increasing flow of new customers. They needed to create a reputable, persona-based certification credential to increase their visibility in the market.

After looking into the options, Procore decided to integrate Skilljar with low-stakes certifications. Their program included a combination of the following technologies:

- Skilljar – A Learning Management System designed specifically for the customer training use case.
- LinkedIn – A professional networking site with the option for users to display certificates on their profiles.
- Salesforce – A Customer Relationship Management system, which serves as the point of record for all customer data.
- Token-based SSO – A security technique, which authenticates users with a single ID and password for multiple systems.

As a result, Procore was able to:

- Streamline their onboarding
- Create a tailored curriculum
- Build their LinkedIn community
- Improve data flow and reporting
- And verify certifications with ease.

They also implemented blended learning (specifically, a combination of role-based certifications, continued education, and webinars), allowing them to effectively scale their program.

View their training portal here: education.procore.com





Seamlessly Integrating Learning Pathways and Proctored Certification Through Skilljar

MapR provides the industry's only converged data platform that uniquely allows applying analytical insights to operational processes in real-time to create competitive advantage for our customers.

Before launching this project, their pain points included:

- 3rd party handled certifications
- Changes, which were complicated and regularly required multiple parties, even for small edits
- Technical issues with existing LMS

MapR was seeking a solution that could establish them as the leading provider of training and certification in big data processing, while increasing customer and community engagement.

After looking into the options, MapR decided to integrate Skilljar with their high-stakes certifications program.

Their program included a combination of the following technologies:

- Skilljar – A Learning Management System designed specifically for the customer training use case.
- PSI – A remote proctoring solution for high-stakes testing.
- Salesforce – A Customer Relationship Management system, which serves as the point of record for all customer data.
- Marketo – A marketing automation platform to promote training and encourage course completions.
- Okta – An identity management/SSO provider.

As a result, they were able to:

- Give more exams and certifications with remote proctoring
- Manage their own content everywhere – without any vendor intervention
- Create a smooth data flow between Skilljar and Innovative Exams
- Improve scalability and the learner experience.

View their training portal here: learn.mapr.com

Conclusion

We hope this eBook has given you insight into the benefits of combining your LMS with certifications.

By doing so, you'll be able to:

1. Achieve integrated learning outcomes
2. Personalize user learning pathways
3. Measure the impacts of certification

Both Procore and MapR have successfully broken down their customer training and certification silos to launch industry-leading programs. Your organization can be next!



Skilljar's award-winning customer training platform enables you to successfully onboard, engage, and retain your customers and partners. Our cloud learning management system (LMS) makes it easy to create courses, distribute to web and mobile devices, and track results.

Skilljar helps you accelerate product adoption, automate onboarding workflows, reduce support costs, and increase long-term customer satisfaction.

Request Demo

